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221[x] North send them the longed-for rains. There had been no rain for weeks, except only in the region of Rueysh-dat, where it had rained almost in torrents. The broad depressions were still full of water and smaller pools and puddles were dotted all over the district.

At last came the time for the start. The whole desert basin was alive and thronging with herds moving in one great heaving mass. There arose the confused din of more than three hundred thousand animals, which for miles round spread a penetrating musk-like smell.

492 493 221[x] Apart, on the flanks of the main mass, were the pack-camels, laden with tents, equipment, provisions, and so forth, under the guard of their drivers. Hundreds of lofty travelling-litters loomed up among them—the *kethabs* of the *shiyukhs* and wealthy tribesmen, tall "riding-tents" with widely curved horns, balanced on the backs of the long-legged beasts. Their interiors are adorned with costly silk and cashmere stuffs; the seats and backs are lined with rugs and padded with soft cushions. Like the wings of giant butterflies, the spreading sides of these tall and airy structures dipped above the tossing sea of animals.

221[x] Unceasingly, the stream of camels welled up from the basin to unite in an immense tidal wave more than five miles wide. The great columns of the camel trains began to take shape. With tireless energy, in all this heat, dust and noise, riders on sweating horses galloped from side to side, directing the herders where to fall in with their charges, mother camels and baby camels. The air resounded with the roaring, braying and squealing of the camels, the neighings of horses, the calls and curses of

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Bedouin Boy with "Horn" Headdress

Note the Heavy Robes of the Women and Children

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Mawia Climbing into Camel-Litter

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Tuēma had meanwhile returned to her own dwelling at the lower end of the valley. Her girl friends had been busy selecting the handsomest camel-litter and decorating it for the occasion. With its ornate marriage canopy it was mounted on a fine, gorgeously caparisoned camel, which slaves then led to Tuēma's tent. There the bride mounted to her lofty seat between the slender horns of the camel-litter and, with songs and shouts and waving of scarves, her girl friends escorted her to the tent of the bridegroom.

Before the women's quarters, but so arranged that Faris on his couch could see everything, Tuēma made her camel kneel down. Faris's mother and sisters, attended by numerous men and women slaves, greeted and received the bride ceremoniously.

Close by, Mnahi held an old white battle-mare by the halter. Auda, "the helper", she was called, and also the "Virginal Kuhaylat-Ajuz", for she had never been mated. The Ruala all but worshipped her as sacred. As a three-year-old she had been presented to Misha'il as a gift, on the birth of her son, Amir Fuaz. The mare was thus twenty-seven years old and her body bore the scars of many a raid. Over her back was spread a white lamb's-skin rug, the "Virgin Fleece" which, according to immemorial custom, the Bedouin bride brings to the bridegroom as a wedding gift.

Tuēma had disappeared into the harem to be attired in her wedding dress by Faris's mother and sisters. When she came out again, she was resplendent in a rich cashmere gown woven in red and green (it had been worn by Faris's mother at her own bridal ceremony) and a